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ABSTRACT

What should the aims of education be in a liberal society? Who should exercise control over children's education in a liberal state, and what form should that control take? Should all schools be forced to enter an 'educational marketplace?' How can children be taught to become good citizens of a pluralistic state? This book seeks to answer these questions by drawing upon political theory, philosophy of education, and empirical research to develop a liberal theory of children's education that is provocative and new. Contrary to the assumptions of many philosophers, educators, parents, and politicians, the liberal state is obligated as a matter of justice to help all children develop the capacity for autonomy, regardless of parents' or other citizens' preferences. The book argues that all children should attend common schools that are regulated by the state, detached from parental control, and driven by the aim of educating for autonomy, and that liberal governments should exercise much greater control over schools than they now do. Following an introduction, chapters in the book are: (1) "Autonomy and the Foundations of Contemporary Liberalism"; (2) "The Development of Autonomy"; (3) "Modifying the Liberal Educational Ideal"; (4) "Culture, Choice, and Citizenship: Schooling Private Citizens in the Public Square"; and (5) "Making Sense of It All: Transforming Political Theory into Educational Policy." Each chapter includes notes. Contains an extensive bibliography. (BT)

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